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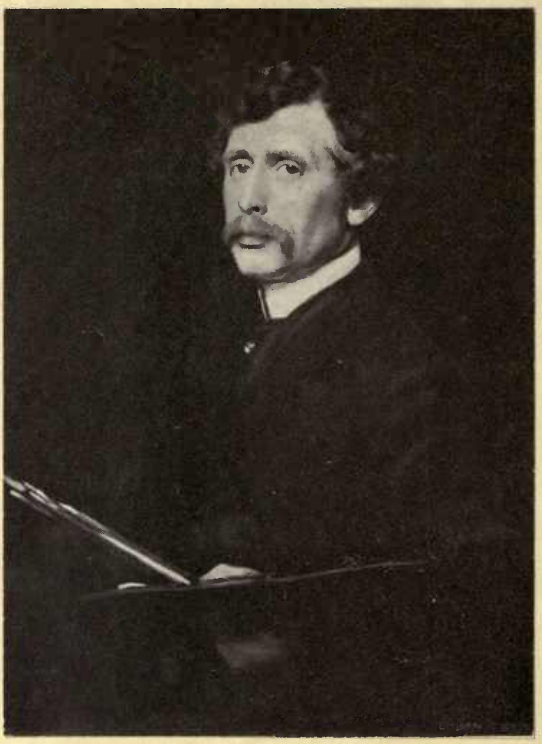

Louis Renaud

A COLLECTION OF BOOK PLATE DESIGNS

BY

LOUIS RHEAD

W·PORTER
TRUESDELL
PUBLISHER

BOSTON·MDCCCCVII

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ELDOM is it that knights of the brush whose work is of a like high quality are as prolific and wide in range of talent as Louis Rhead, who paints in oils and water colors, draws and etches. He is also an expert on bookbinding, and at the time when posters were in vogue was known as one of the foremost designers, having won a number of medals in competitions and exhibitions, and has several hundred designs to his credit.

Mr. Rhead came to this country in 1883, and at once became very active in his art, painting pictures which have been exhibited in the principal cities of this country, in the Paris Salon, and Royal Academy of London.

Mr. Rhead was born in an artistic atmosphere, Etruria, Staffordshire, in which town the celebrated potteries of Josiah Wedgewood &

Sons were made. The members of his immediate family are all artists; his elder brother is a member of the London Society of Painter-Etchers, and was the friend of Rossetti, George Frederick Watts, Madox Brown and other artists of note, of whose work he has executed many large plates. Mr. Rhead's father and mother, two sisters and two brothers have also made reputations in the art world.

Mr. Rhead seriously began to study art at the age of thirteen, under the French painter Boullemier. He learned to draw the human figure remarkably well, and won a national scholarship, which enabled him to study at South Kensington. Four years later he was well launched on his artistic career, and was earning a comfortable income. He was still an industrious student, however, and improved his art by work under Legros Dalou, the sculptor, and Sir Edward Poynter, President of the Royal Academy.

After devoting himself for a time to making sketches and paintings of rural England, Mr. Rhead was engaged by the publishing house of Appleton, New York, and, at the age of twen-

ty-four, came to this country, where he has since remained, except during the intervals of several trips to London and Paris.

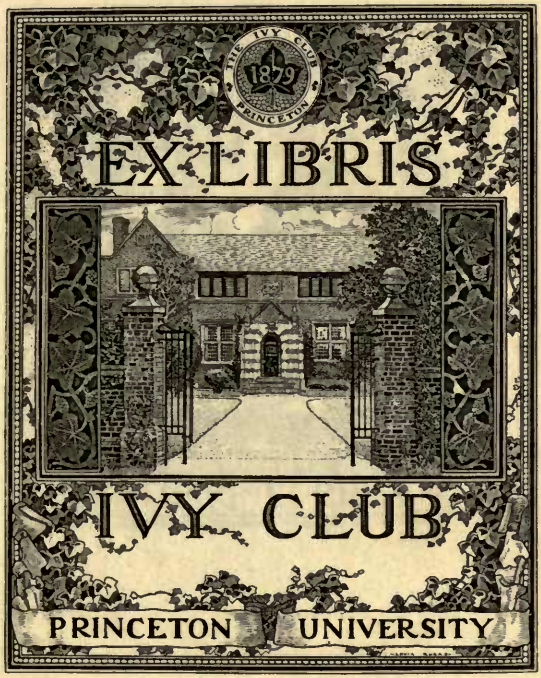
The artistic publications of the Grolier Club, of which Mr. Rhead has been a member since 1887, owe much to his fine skill in bookbinding and cover designing. Among the best and most representative examples of his designs are the inside and outside covers of a new edition of "Knickerbocker's History of New York," by Irving. Mr. Rhead recently illustrated and decorated a number of books of classic literature, among them "The Pilgrim's Progress" and "Mr. Badman," by Bunyan, "Idyls of the King," "Robinson Crusoe" and the "Psalms of David."

He regards his illustrations in black and white of Bunyan's works, and particularly of "Mr. Badman," as his highest achievements thus far. These drawings, which were done in collaboration with his brothers, George and Frederick, are so strong and virile that they have given new interest and fresh life to Bunyan's classics, which were beginning to come into the category of books often referred to but

rarely read. Louis Rhead made the larger part of the drawings. They are in the style of the old German engravings and seem to precisely reflect the essence of Bunyan's powerful and gloomy imagination, and also the quaint and picturesque England of the roundhead writer's time. The grotesque and fearsome allegorical figures, the giants and the dragons have, in many of the pictures, typically English backgrounds. This combination results in a very effective representation of Bunyan's genius.

In his book-plate designs Mr. Rhead has been equally successful; and seems to have brought to this branch of art all the originality, decorativeness and perfection of his larger and more pretentious work. His tendency toward the decorative received an added impetus from his appreciation of the masterly designs of Eugene Grasset, whom he regards as the greatest living master of decorative design. As a rule, the designing of book-plates seems to have been given over to the so-called decorative designers, who, while excellent in their particular field would not come under the same head as those who, like Mr. Rhead, devote the most of

their time to painting in the illustrative vein, so it is of moment when artists like Mr. Rhead have turned their attention to the book-plate, and given us some beautiful examples which reflect the breadth and maturity of the practised artist. A number of the plates herewith show the force of this in their general sketchiness as in the Swan design: for beautiful decorative designs, the Peacock and Pool plates; for studies of the human figure all the plates and particularly the two architectural designs and the Turnure, Barhydt and Katharine Rhead plates. Always an ardent sportsman, Mr. Rhead has latterly devoted himself to out of door subjects, and his books on Lake and Brook Trout, Fresh and Salt Water Bass are among the most admired of the nature books. Mr. Rhead's fishing plate is shown herewith also the handsome plate of the Ivy Club of Princeton University.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FORTITUDE
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DO WHAT'S RIGHT
COME WHAT MAY
KATHARINE RHEAD

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Simon Peter said,
I go a fishing: and
they said we also wil go with thee.
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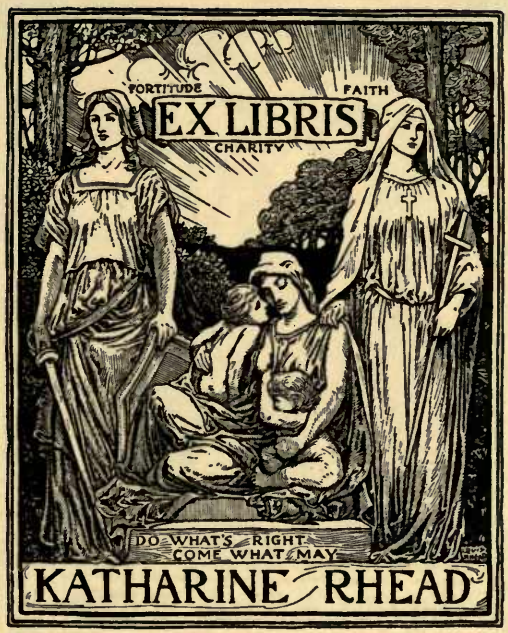
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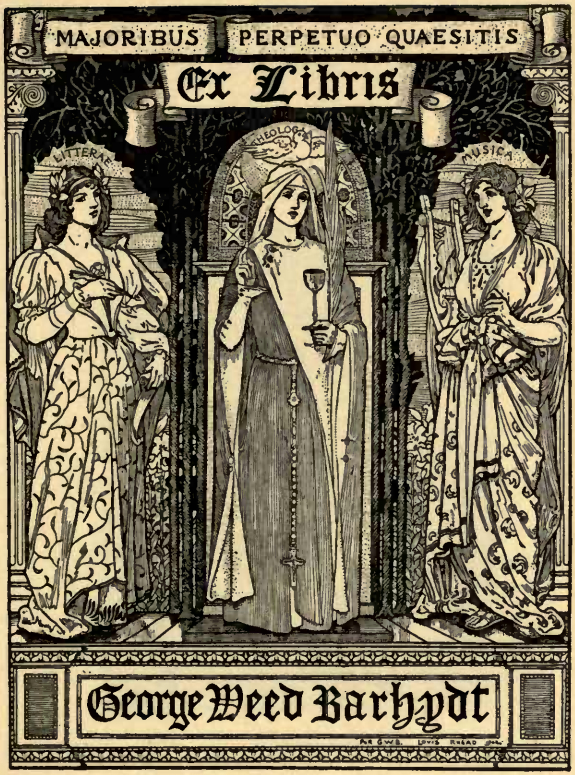
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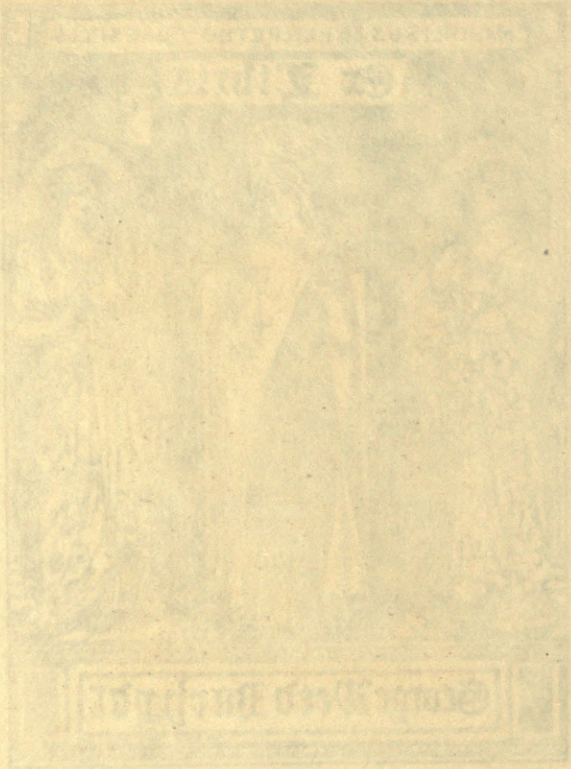

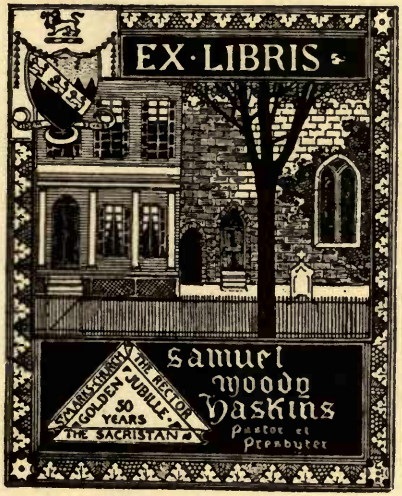
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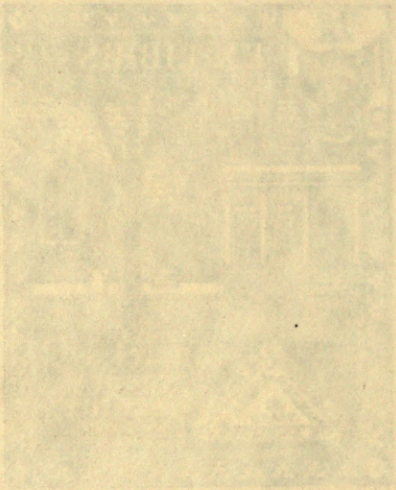

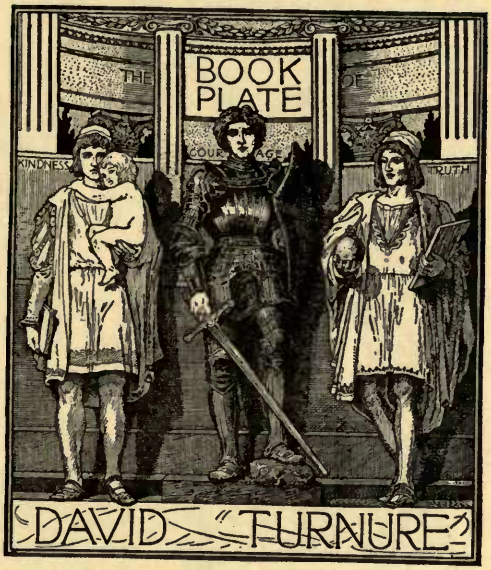
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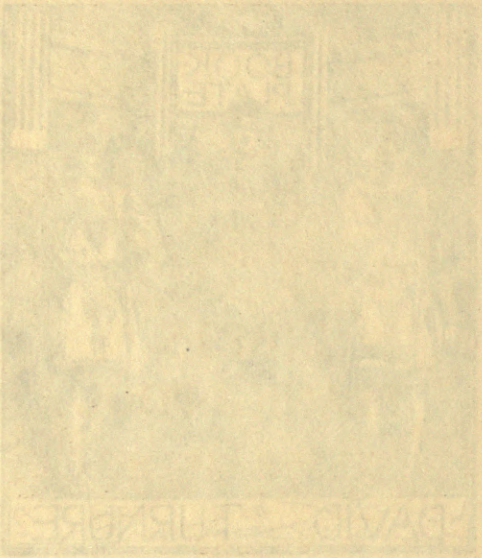

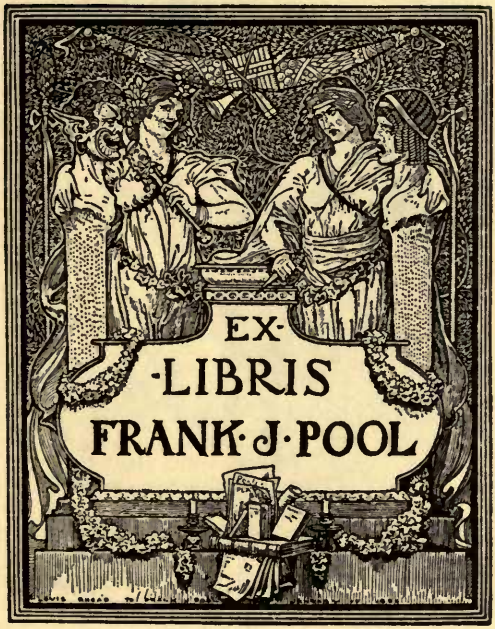
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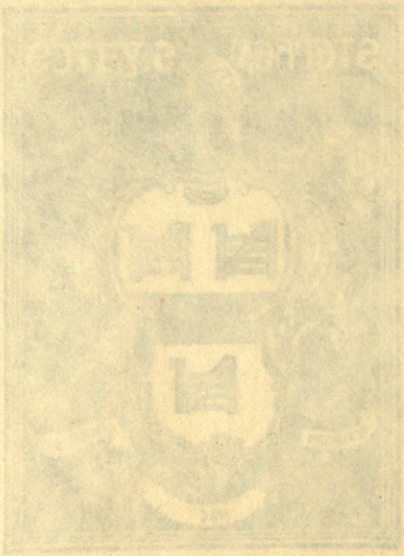

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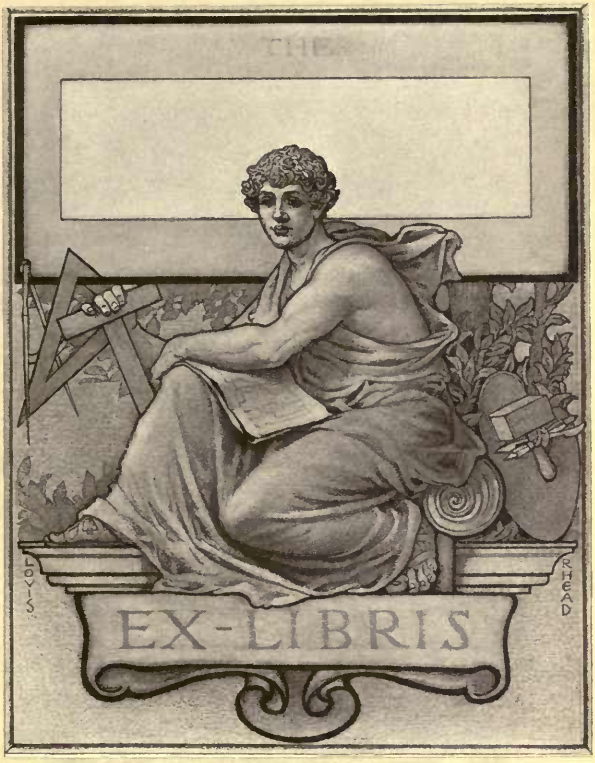
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